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PLIN. *EP.* II. 12. 4

Pliny is exclaiming over the unreasonableness of a decision of the Senate which allowed a man convicted of complicity in extortion to retain his seat in that body, subject to certain limitations of privilege: "quid enim miserius quam exsectum et exemptum honoribus senatoriis labore et molestia non carere? quid grauius quam tanta ignominia adfectum non in solitudine latere . . . ? praeterea quid publice minus aut congruens aut decorum <quam> notatum a senatu in senatu sedere," etc.

All of the MSS, of whatever family, read without *quam* between *decorum* and *notatum*, and the earlier editors were content to follow them in that particular. Sichardus, however, in his recension of the Aldine edition (Basel, 1530), inserted *quam*, doubtless out of regard for the structure of the preceding sentences. His example was not without influence on subsequent editors, though many still clung to the MS reading, ordinarily punctuating with an interrogation point after *decorum* as well as after *sedere* and the corresponding infinitives that follow. Keil also, in his first edition (1853), went back to the MSS, but later repented, and in his Erlangen programm of 1865 (p. 16) defended briefly the insertion of *quam*, and inserted it in his critical edition of 1870, wherein he has been followed by later editors. The grounds of his defense are Pliny's regard for *conciinnitas orationis*, and doubt whether the exclamatory phrase could be used by him in such a connection (apparently he means without *quam* after a comparative).

Pliny's regard for a mechanical *conciinnitas orationis* has been (*me iudice*) altogether exaggerated by some scholars, though that question is too large to enter upon here. But the omission of *quam* after a comparative and before a clause can be paralleled from Pliny's friend and fellow-rhetorician, Tacitus, who, according to the MS tradition, wrote, in *Ann.* ii. 77. 1 f., "Domitius Celer . . . disseruit . . . si quid hostile ingruat, quem iustius arma oppositurum qui legati auctoritatem et propria mandata acceperit?" Here Lipsius inserted *quam* before *qui*, and has been followed therein by later editors. But the correspondence of phrase and setting in the passages from Pliny and Tacitus, though not perfect, prompts the thought that the MSS of both authors may be right, and the omission of *quam* after a comparative and before a clause in rhetorical appeals be more frequent than is commonly supposed. A further, and perfect, parallel can be found in *Aetna* 253 ff. (Ellis):

nam quae, mortales, super est amentia maior,  
in Iouis errantem regno perquirere uelle,  
tantum opus ante pedes transire ac perdere segnem?

Whatever the variations of text here, there are none that affect the construction at issue. I should be grateful for information of other similar instances.

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